Pol 14 Viet S (1434)

Department of State **TELEGRAM**

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE 117

PAGE 01 SAIGON 04062 191224Z

11
ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-08 L-04

NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 UPW-01

IO-13 RSR-01 /122 W

086107

R 191130Z MAR 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2434
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jean Syphers DATE 1/26/82
RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. EXEMPTION(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKING
DECLASSIFIED/RELEASABLE
RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

SAIGON 4062 1/19/71

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAIGON 4062

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: FINAL UPPER HOUSE VOTE ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BILL.

REF : SAIGON 3990 Pol 14 Viet S XR Pol 15-1 Viet S

1. SUMMARY: UPPER HOUSE APPROVED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BILL MARCH 19. MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE VOTED BY SENATORS WAS ELIMINATION OF ENDORSEMENT PRINCIPLE (REFTEL). COMBINATION OF FACTORS CAUSED HEAVY VOTE AGAINST ENDORSEMENT, INCLUDING LACK OF ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT BY EXECUTIVE. MEASURE NOW GOES TO LOWER HOUSE FOR SECOND-ROUND ACTION. END SUMMARY

2. UPPER HOUSE GAVE FINAL APPROVAL TO PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BILL MARCH 19 BY VOTE OF 28 TO 7#.

3. MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE ADOPTED BY UPPER HOUSE WAS ELIMINATION OF ENDORSEMENT CONCEPT(REFTEL). SEVERAL OTHER CHANGES REFLECTED DESIGN OF SENATORS TO STRENGTHEN ELECTORAL PROCEDURES

(1)

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

25

CLASSIFIED

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

IN EFFORT TO AVOID FRAUDULENT PRACTICES. SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS HAVING POSSIBLE POLITICAL IMPACT INCLUDED (A) REJECTION OF PROVISION FOR A SECOND VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ON THE SLATE TO SUBSTITUTE FOR PRIMARY CANDIDATE UNABLE TO CONTINUE CAMPAIGN AND (B) EXEMPTION OF CANDIDATES REPRESENTING RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES FROM REQUIREMENT OF 2 MILLION PIASTER DEPOSIT. HOWEVER, PARTY CANDIDATES, LIKE OTHERS, MUST REIMBURSE GOVERNMENT FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES IF THEY FAIL TO GET 20 PERCENT OF VOTE.

4. COMMENTS: REASON FOR HEAVY VOTE AGAINST ENDORSEMENT PRINCIPLE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN COMBINATION OF LUKEWARM SUPPORT BY ENDORSEMENT SUPPORTERS, WHO SAW THAT EXECUTIVE NO LONGER PUSHING IDEA, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL ARGUMENTS MADE BY OPPOSITION. EXCEPT FOR SENATOR MAU'S GROUP, HOWEVER, THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARGUMENT WAS APPARENTLY LESS COMPELLING THAN WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT PROVISION'S UNPOPULARITY WAS POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORTED IT. ALSO, SOME SENATORS FEEL THAT PROVISION IS UNNECESSARY THIS YEAR, BECAUSE ONLY A FEW CANDIDATES ARE NOW ON HORIZON. REJECTION OF SIMILAR PROVISION FOR 1967 ELECTION, INCLUDING THIEU'S OWN OPPOSITION AT THAT TIME, WAS LIKEWISE CITED BY SEVERAL SENATORS DURING DEBATE AS REASON FOR REJECTION. INTERESTING THAT CHAIRMAN HUYEN'S GROUP VOTED EN MASSE AGAINST ENDORSEMENT.

5. MEASURE NOW GOES BACK TO LOWER HOUSE FOR SECOND-ROUND ACTION, WHERE TWO-THIRDS VOTE NECESSARY TO RESTORE ENDORSEMENT PROVISION.
BUNKER.

NOTE BY OC/T: SAIGON 4062, # AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST.

25

NOT DECLASSIFIED